

A MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO CONVENE A WORK GROUP TO STUDY AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PREVENTION OF TEEN DATING VIOLENCE IN NEW MEXICO.

WHEREAS, dating violence among teens and young adults has become an increasingly visible problem in our society; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence cuts across race, gender and socioeconomic lines, affecting both males and females, although females are injured more severely and more frequently; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence includes a spectrum of abusive behaviors, including isolation, anger, emotional abuse, domination and control, intimidation, threats and sexual coercion as well as overt violence; and

WHEREAS, teens in violent relationships are at risk of being killed by their abusive partners and are eight to nine percent more likely to attempt suicide; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence is linked to poor school attendance and poor academic achievement; and

WHEREAS, teens in violent dating relationships are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; and

WHEREAS, teen dating violence may result in depression, anxiety and eating disorders; and

WHEREAS, teens who are experiencing dating violence are at risk for sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy; and

WHEREAS, a national survey shows that nearly twenty-five percent of surveyed youth fourteen to seventeen years old report knowing at least one student victim of dating violence, and thirty-three percent of these young people report having witnessed such an event; and

WHEREAS, in a guide to safe and healthy relationships that was developed by New Mexico teens, titled *Love and Respect*, teens state that dating violence is a major issue in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2007 youth and resiliency survey, one in nine high school students in the state report being hit by their boyfriends or girlfriends within the past year, which exceeds the national average; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico standards for excellence for health education in grades five through twelve contain a strong emphasis on helping young people to develop the skills and knowledge to recognize both healthy and unhealthy behaviors in personal relationships and to make healthy choices in the face of risks, threats and dangers; and

WHEREAS, many state agencies, organizations and advocates are taking action in numerous venues to raise the awareness of teens, parents and the public about teen dating

violence; and

WHEREAS, a wealth of resources has been developed to help teens make healthy choices and stay safe in relationships, including web sites, teen-developed videos, media campaigns, school curricula and classroom materials;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the public education department and the department of health be requested to convene a work group to study and develop recommendations regarding prevention of teen dating violence in New Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group include representation from the children's cabinet, the New Mexico youth alliance, the New Mexico forum for youth in community, the New Mexico commission on the status of women, the children, youth and families department, community youth organizations, public school districts, school health educators and counselors, school-based health clinics and other appropriate organizations and individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group utilize electronic meeting venues, where possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations of the work group include strategies for educating parents, raising public awareness and utilizing and integrating existing resources as much as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the work group present a written report of its findings and recommendations to the governor, the lieutenant governor and the legislative education study committee by October 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted to the secretary of public education, the secretary of health and the director of the legislative education study committee.